

Lebanon's Army shouldn't be used by Hezbollah for propaganda purposes

Contributed by John Hajjar
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It was shocking to read and see images of Lebanese Army cadets visiting sites in South Lebanon honoring the terror group Hezbollah.

As it was reported in the Lebanese press, "150 Officer Cadets from the Lebanese Army Academy visited the Mlita Jihadi Touristic Site established by Hezbollah in the 'Iklim el Toufah - Nabatieh' region as part of the Academy's curriculum for its students." The report goes on: "The Mlita site encompasses replicas, tunnels and Israeli spoils of war that Hezbollah grouped in what resembles a museum. The visiting group was accompanied by the Nabatieh office director of the Lebanese Army Intelligence Directorate, Lieutenant Colonel Ali Ismail. The cadets toured destroyed tanks and military vehicles. They also visited Mlita heights and slopes and a 300m long tunnel dug inside Mlita's hill, going all the way to the Soujoud area trenches. The cadets examined the Kornet missile system as well as the TOW type along with other weapon systems put on display by Hezbollah."

This flagrant display of support to a terror group is unacceptable and breaches international law. UN Resolution 1559 of 2005 has called for the disarming of Hezbollah, but Lebanese Army command approves a visit to this terror organization's sites as symbolic praise for Hezbollah's weapons. We condemn the visit and call on the US Congress and the State Department to investigate this move. Hezbollah is on the United States terror list. President Trump has called for its isolation. Congress has called for its disarming. However, we see that the Pentagon is still pledging military and financial aid to the Lebanese Army despite these flagrant breaches to international law and US policies. In fact, alarmingly, some in our defense and political establishment have argued that by funding Lebanese Armed Forces we will enable the latter to force Hezbollah into accepting disarming. Unfortunately this last development shows the opposite. Hezbollah's propaganda is using the Lebanese Army cadets to promote their terror organization.

When the Lebanese Army units fight ISIS in Ersal in the northern Bekaa, we are all supportive of it, as Lebanese-Americans. But when Lebanese Army cadets honor Hezbollah cadets, we find it reprehensible.

US policy has to adjust itself to this move and appropriate measures should be taken. Lebanese soldiers and officers are hostage to the terror group Hezbollah while the Lebanese government is unable to make any decision to stop these breaches

The officials responsible for this decision should be named, and US measures should be applied to them. Our taxpayers cannot fund Lebanese Army visits to a terror group that killed not only Americans, but also Lebanese, Syrians and Iraqis. The Pentagon should also open an investigation and summon the military attaché of the Lebanese embassy to lodge a complaint. We will support the Lebanese Army against all terrorists, no distinction among the latter.

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